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A Guide to the

Prehistory

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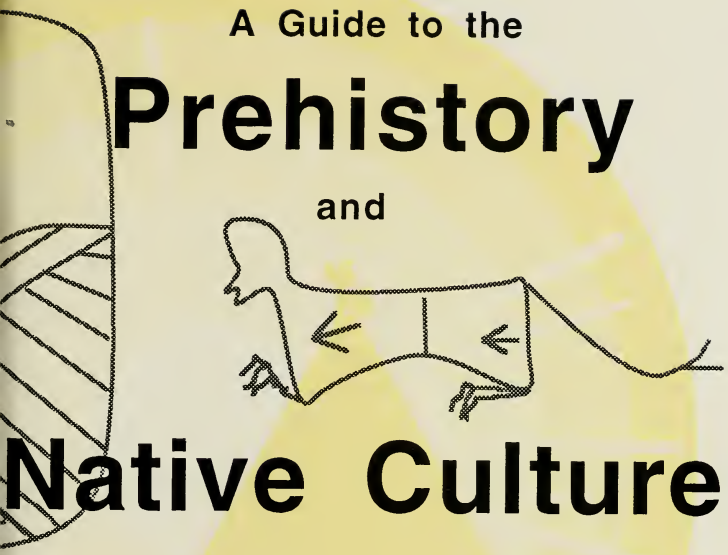

Native Cultures

of Southwestern Illinois

and the Greater St. Louis Area

Illinois Historic
Preservation Agency
Illinois Archaeological Educational Series No. 2

ILLINOIS HISTORICAL SURVEY

A Tour Guide to the

Prehistory and Native Cultures

of Southwestern Illinois and the Greater St. Louis Area

Timothy R. Pauketat, Ph.D.
Central Mississippi Valley Archaeological Research Institute
and the
University of Oklahoma

1993

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Illinois Archaeology Educational Series
Number 2

Thomas E. Emerson, Series Editor

The Illinois Archaeology Educational Series was developed by the Illinois State Historic Preservation Office and the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency. In keeping with IHPA's mission to protect, preserve and interpret Illinois' past this series is designed to provide educational information to the public, classroom teachers, and professional educators on the archaeological resources of the state.

A Guide to the Prehistory and Native Cultures of Southwestern Illinois and the Greater St. Louis Area provides the public with a guide to the spectacular prehistoric landscapes of the past and serves to foster and encourage a preservation ethic to save these important remnants of past cultures.

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1
A Journey Into the Past: Our Native-American Heritage

The past lies buried beneath your feet. You walk over the same land that Native Americans trod hundreds and thousands of years ago. If you look, you can see where these people lived and gain an appreciation of the past. Today, in the St. Louis Metropolitan area of Southwestern Illinois, this past is hidden to many of us, but it is a past worth discovering. We discover our Native-American heritage through "archaeology," the study of the lifestyles and cultures of these peoples of the past.

In your hands is a guide to an archaeological journey through time and space. As you turn the pages, you will encounter ancient peoples—where they lived, worked and died. These peoples faced the problems of their daily lives just as we do today and they did this on the same landscape that we live on today.

Please follow along and discover for yourself the native cultures which existed in the vicinity of the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan area in "prehistory," that is, before Columbus landed in the New World. Reach back in time using this guide to the archaeology of Southwestern Illinois. This guide gives you the background information on a number of significant archaeological sites and provides directions to visit these sites. By taking this journey into the past, you confront your own modern-day world and are better able to compare it to the native world which existed before Columbus.

Southwestern Illinois

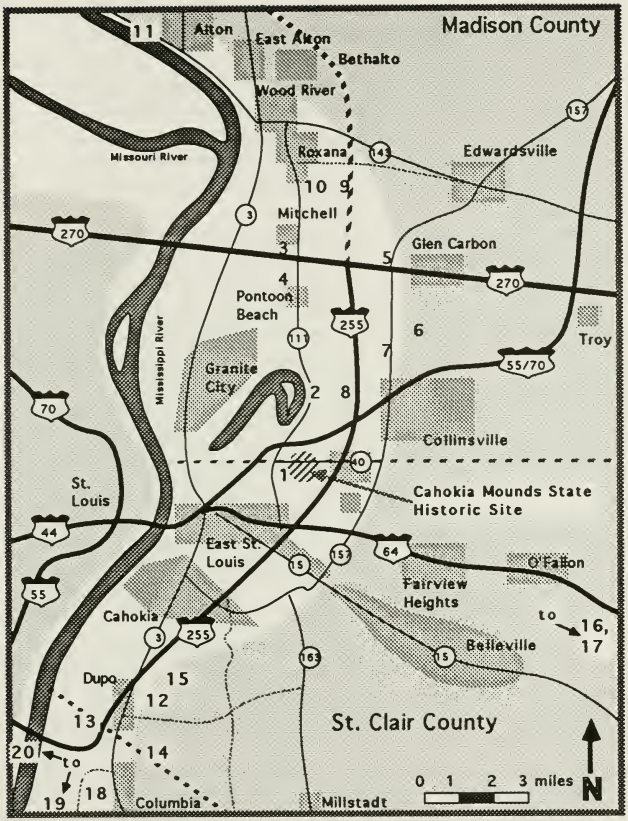
ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Chapter 2 in this booklet begins your journey through 12,000 years of our Native-American heritage. Chapter 3 guides you through the actual archaeological sites and landmarks to visit or view. There are 5 individual Mini-Tours in all which take you past 20 individual points of interest—archaeological sites, natural landmarks and wonderful prehistoric monuments. Each point of interest is labeled with a number. Each Mini-Tour is assigned a letter designation (A through E). Mini-Tours may be taken individually or combined into larger excursions as you desire. Touring options are listed at the end of each Mini-Tour.

Mini-Tours may be taken at any time of the year, although spring and fall are probably the best seasons to obtain the fullest views of mounds and other points of interest. The leaves of trees and the crops in fields are small or absent during the fall through spring and a number of Indian mounds may be difficult to see during the summer months.

This guide is designed for automobile tours. You will probably find it useful to have on hand Illinois and Missouri road maps in addition to this guide. You might also bring along a camera and a pair of binoculars for viewing those far-off points of interest. Picnic lunches might be considered or you could discover fine cafes and restaurants to quiet your appetite in the downtowns of Alton, Wood River, Columbia, Lebanon, Waterloo and even tiny Modoc or Maeystown. Depending on how much time you spend at any particular site, a given Mini-Tour can take from as little as part of a morning or afternoon to as much as a full day.

You will use public roads and lands to visit publicly owned sites and to view privately owned landmarks. Most of these sites are privately owned, so please be sure not to trespass or disturb the rights of private citizens. In the same way, please respect the public lands which you visit. Do not remove artifacts, which includes everything from bits of broken stone, bone and potsherds to arrowheads and spear points. Even the most common-looking rock may hold great significance to an archaeologist. If you do happen to observe something or some activity which might be of archaeological importance, please contact one of the professional organizations listed in the back of this book.



MAP

Highways and Points of Interest showing:
1) Cahokia; 2) Horseshoe Lake; 3) Mitchell; 4) Outlying Mound; 5) Kane Mounds; 6-7) Bluff-Top Mounds; 8) Bishop Mound; 9) Wanda Mound; 10) South Roxana Mounds; 11) Piasa Monster; 12) Sugarloaf Mound; 13) Pulcher Mounds; 14) Waterloo Anticline; 15) Falling Springs; 16) Pfeffer; 17) Emerald Mound; 18) Sand Bank Bluffs; 19) Modoc; 20) Mastodon State Park.

This guide has been written to encourage responsible management of our prehistoric Native-American heritage. Such management of our natural or historical heritage is the duty of us all, either working through government or independent of government. Many archaeological sites in Southwestern Illinois are in peril, threatened by modern development which often does not stop to consider the historical, cultural and natural landmarks which might be in the way.

You can help preserve and manage the remains of prehistoric native cultures and nature only if you are informed. This guide is intended to inform you of the prehistory and native cultures of Southwestern Illinois and the Greater St. Louis area. You can and should be concerned about the past *and* the future of the past—how we understand it, teach it to our children and take care of those bits of the past that remain.

The final stop on your trip into prehistory is Chapter 4. Here, the scope of our prehistoric heritage and the challenges of the 21st century come into focus. You may answer for yourself why understanding the gulf between prehistory and history is important. You may feel, as do many others, that knowledge of the past helps us to better understand our own present—how we take care of our environment, how culture and politics change and how civilizations rise and fall. Only you will know where your journey has taken you.

Perhaps your trip through time will be but a first step in a much longer journey. There is much more to discover than can be covered in this guide book. To find out more about the archaeology of the region, additional places or museums to visit or professional archaeologists or organizations to contact, check the back pages of this guide. A glossary of archaeological words underlined in the text is located at the end of the book.

The journey before you need not take up a large amount of your time yet it is rewarding. So let us begin. Please read along at your leisure and follow the directions to the places highlighted in this guide.

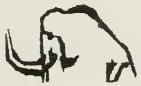
Now, your adventure begins. . .

2
Southwestern Illinois Prehistory

Beginning in the year 1673, the canoes of French traders would glide through the waters of the Mississippi River unaware of the great cultural centers which had existed there before Columbus. It was in 1673 that Marquette and Jolliet canoed down the Mississippi River. Up to that time, there had been little if any direct contact between European explorers and native Illinoians. The Mississippi River opposite modern-day St. Louis was a quiet plain. Here the mighty Mississippi spilled its flood waters. Here flocks of ducks and geese rested on their annual trek, fish and game animals were abundant, and cultivated crops—corn, squash, sunflowers—grew well. Today, much of this same flood plain is filled with houses, highways, industries and people. Granite City, East St. Louis, Wood River, Cahokia and other cities are found here. In the hills to the east of the flood plain are farming, mining and factory towns: Edwardsville, Collinsville, O'Fallon, Lebanon, Belleville, Alton.

The quiet plain and forested hills of prehistory are gone now, but left behind are the archaeological traces of the native people who lived here before the modern cities, highways, industries, and mines. You can still see the old abandoned fields, encampments, village sites and mounds. These archaeological remains were not left behind by a few people over a century or two. No, the archaeological remains of the Greater St. Louis area accumulated over a period of at least 12,000 years! Archaeologists recognize artifacts—stone tools, broken pottery, bones and charred food remains—from four principal periods of prehistory: Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian.

PALEO-INDIAN PERIOD (10,000-8000 B.C.)



The first North Americans, called Paleo-Indians, lived in a much cooler Ice Age or "Pleistocene" climate. The earliest of these

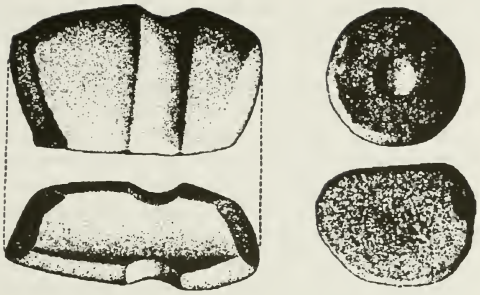
had migrated from Asia by crossing a land bridge which was then in existence between Siberia and Alaska. By 10,000 B.C., Paleo-Indian hunters roamed across parts of North America, some in search of now-extinct big-game animals like the mastodon, mammoth, giant sloths, bears, and bison. Some, perhaps even those in Illinois and Missouri, followed herds of caribou. These first Americans experienced a natural landscape dramatically different from today. Parts of Illinois and Missouri may have been similar in climate and vegetation to northern Canada or Alaska today. High well-drained hills seem to have been favored places to live and perhaps to travel along. Unfortunately, Paleo-Indians left little behind to see today. Scattered chipped-stone spear points (like those pictured to the right—the longest measures about 4 inches in length) and hide-scraping tools dating to the Paleo-Indian Period have been found on prominent hills and at the headwaters of major stream drainages around Belleville, O'Fallon, and Alton.

The Paleo-Indian Period ended with the close of the Ice Age. Beginning around 8000 B.C. when the ice sheets of the Pleistocene melted away and the prehistoric big-game animals became extinct, new ways of life were gradually adopted. These new lifeways have been grouped by archaeologists within the "Archaic" Period.

ARCHAIC PERIOD (8000-500 B.C.)

As the forests of oaks and hickories and the prairie grasses that we know today began to take over the natural landscapes after the Ice Age, the foods and the lifestyles of the Native-American peoples changed as well. Based on the number of archaeological sites and the kind of debris found at these sites, there seems to have been many more people in any given location. In addition, they seem to have roamed less widely than their Paleo-Indian ancestors. These Archaic-Period Indians probably did not live in one place year-round, but perhaps did have seasonal homes in which families shared in community activities. There are few known houses, most of which were

probably temporary. On occasion, rock shelters or overhanging rocky bluffs served as seasonal homes. One such site, called Modoc Rock Shelter, is found south of Valmeyer, Illinois along the Bluff Road (see Mini-Tour E). However, open-air sites usually were selected by Archaic-Period peoples and many have been recorded by archaeologists.



Archaic sites which have been excavated in the Greater St. Louis area have shown that many different types of foods made up the diet of the people. These foods included hickory nuts, acorns, fish, and the meat of deer, raccoon, squirrel, duck, turkey, geese and turtles (just to name a few). Archaic-Period hunters used spears tipped with chipped-chert points and thrown with the aid of a catapult-like throwing stick also called an atlatl. Ground-stone tools, like the grooved axehead above (left: about 6 inches in length) and the grinding stones (right: 3-4 inches in diameter) were used to cut wood and mill seeds. Gardens were tended. Squash and the seeds of wild plants and sunflowers were eaten, especially during the *Late* Archaic Period and into the "Woodland" Period.

WOODLAND PERIOD (500 B.C.-A.D. 800)

Around 500 B.C., it is apparent from archaeological excavations that the gardening of certain plants, like marsh elder, squash and chenopods, contributed a very important part of the human diet in the Midwest. Cooking this plant food involved parching and boiling seeds and greens over fires. Thus it was during the Woodland Period that fired-clay cooking pots became a common domestic utensil. The hunting of game seems to have little changed from the Archaic Period, but there may be some evidence by the *Middle* Woodland Period—between A.D. 0

and A.D. 400 or so—that people were more settled than their Archaic ancestors. That is, Woodland peoples probably were closely tied to their gardens and to their residential communities. Based on the location, size, and numbers of sites, archaeologists reason that Middle Woodland communities were closely tied to certain locales within a region. In southwestern Illinois, these communities probably kept in touch with other communities within and beyond the region. Some artifacts found at Middle Woodland sites originate from outside of Southwestern Illinois, demonstrating the people's long-distance social ties. Important people were buried with these artifacts in tombs beneath conical mounds of earth. At one time, these burial mounds dotted the landscape of the Mississippi River flood plain and the surrounding hills. A number of Woodland-Period burial mounds can be seen along the Mini-Tour routes described in Chapter 3. Unfortunately, most of these same mounds have been vandalized in modern times by the greedy or ill-informed treasure hunter.

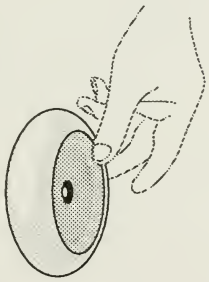
By the *Late* Woodland Period, between about A.D. 400-800, many changes may be recognized in the archaeological remains of southwestern Illinois. The number of people increased. Larger villages appeared. The bow and arrow seems to have been adopted as the primary weapon; tiny stone arrowheads an inch or less long (like the Mississippian examples shown below) tipped the arrows. These Late Woodland developments were related to an even more important change, the addition of corn or maize as a regular part of the human diet. Along with the introduction of maize came a whole suite of social and cultural developments which archaeologists call "Mississippian." It is the Mississippian Period which dominates the archaeology of Southwestern Illinois and upon which emphasis will be placed in the Mini-Tours.

MISSISSIPPIAN PERIOD (A.D. 800-1350)

The Late Woodland-to-Mississippian changes were in part political rather than simply social or cultural. By A.D. 800 in the Mississippi River valley, archaeologists think that certain prestigious families may have been able to control important rites and had privileged access to food and other valuable objects.

Certain members of these high-ranking families probably held the political offices which traditionally were a part of the community but which increasingly gave the official a great deal of political power. These officials or chiefs probably were focal points in the community's yearly production of food, managing the problems of who got what from that year's crop.

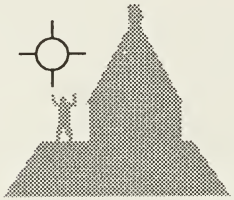
During the earliest two centuries of this period, what archaeologists now call the *Emergent* Mississippian Period (A.D. 800-1000), there is evidence from sites in the Mississippi River flood plain of an astonishing degree of village development. Much of this evidence comes from the Range site (see Mini-Tour C). It is clear from the Range site excavations that during the Emergent Mississippian Period, courtyards became a central feature of villages and hamlets. The circular gaming stones (shown here) of a Native-American sport called chunkey are found near these courtyards, as are pipes which were probably used for smoking tobacco during important community or ritual settings. An array of broken pots from all over Southwestern Illinois are found in the garbage of villages, indicating that a considerable amount of people, food and ideas was moving between families within the region.



By A.D. 800, most communities were fully sedentary, staying in one place for the duration of the year. More and more people were drawn into the flood plain opposite the modern-day city of St. Louis. More and more land was cleared to grow crops. More and more wild animals, particularly deer, were hunted for the chiefs and their families by others. In short, the economy of prehistoric Southwestern Illinois was expanding while the numbers of people and the political power of officials in the region also grew and grew.

These Emergent Mississippian developments reached a climax around A.D. 1000, at which point a dramatic political change occurred, a change which resulted in what archaeologists call fully-developed Mississippian culture. It was at about A.D. 1000 that one or more chiefs at the site of Cahokia seem to have gained control over most of the flood plain between Alton in the north to Dupo in the south. In the decades that followed A.D.

1000, the site of Cahokia grew in size three or four fold. Sometime around A.D. 1000, large Mississippian towns were established within the present-day limits of St. Louis and East St. Louis. These two sites contained about 25 and 50 mounds, respectively, and a population which might even have rivaled Cahokia itself. Today, none of the St. Louis or East St. Louis mounds are visible, most having been destroyed in the 1800s by the expanding metropolitan district.

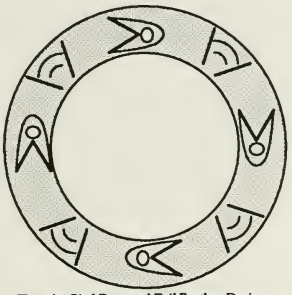


Thousands of people probably lived at Cahokia during the early Mississippian Period. Several thousand more may have resided at the St. Louis and East St. Louis towns. Important buildings and the houses of chiefly officials were built atop impressive flat-topped mounds which surrounded enormous rectangular open plazas, the Mississippian version of the earlier community courtyard. The burials of some elite rulers or chiefs and warriors, perhaps including captives or servants, have been found in four or five special mounds, one known as Mound 72. Finely-crafted weapons, ornaments and chunkey stones were buried along with these people.

Decorated pottery from Arkansas, Louisiana and Mississippi, hammered copper from Lake Superior, lead ore from Missouri, and stone knives, hoe blades, and ceremonial axeheads from southern Illinois and Tennessee have been found at Cahokia. These artifacts are evidence of a vast elite social network which carried along objects and ideas from one chief to the next throughout the Mississippi River valley and beyond. Cahokia was probably the sacred capital of a loosely-organized government made up of chiefs, religious leaders and a ranked hierarchy of families.

The thousands of residents at Cahokia lived under the direct control of the Cahokian rulers. Untold thousands more lived at other towns or farmsteads in the surrounding flood plain. In the bordering hills of Illinois and Missouri were farmsteads, typically consisting of a small pole-and-thatch house or two and a number of outdoor storage pits. Fields of maize and other crops would have surrounded the Mississippian farm house.

Cahokia and the surrounding towns and farmsteads should not be compared to our modern cities with their urban problems. With its 100 mounds, large plazas and residential zones, Cahokia did rank as the principal governmental seat of the most elaborate civilization north of Mexico. However, the character of this civilization was Native American to be sure, quite distinct from other early civilizations around the world. Archaeologists have identified artifacts probably made under the direction of Cahokia rulers which have decorative features depicting Native-American mythical sky-creatures, the four winds, sacred fire and the sun. Political power and even the regional economy probably was based on a set of pervasive religious beliefs. Authority would have been sanctioned by supernatural forces.



Thunder Bird Eyes and Tail Feather Designs on a Pot (Looking Down From Above)

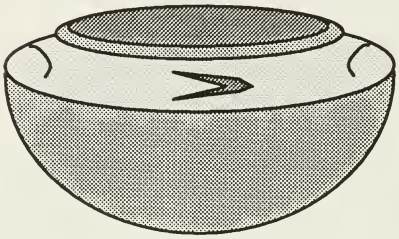
The elite rulers of Cahokia seem to have controlled huge sacred monuments, like the mounds or the Woodhenge. The Woodhenge was a large cosmological symbol—a huge circle of upright wooden posts—perhaps having calendrical uses. It was probably a device used by Cahokian rulers to demonstrate their knowledge of the cosmos, sanctioning their claim to power and their right to rule.

The large and important religious temples and houses of chiefs built atop mounds at Cahokia were ornate centers of religious activities, probably like similar temples and mounds seen by early European explorers in the southeastern United States. Many of the Cahokia mounds seem to have been built in small increments over many years, the mound-building itself perhaps being an integral part of annual agricultural festivals like those recorded to have existed historically among the Creek, Cherokee, Chickasaw and Choctaw Indians.

The common Mississippian people of Southwestern Illinois probably willingly labored for their elite leaders, building the mounds and architecture for the elite and supplying them and their elite families with food and other material resources. Archaeologists are fairly certain, for instance, that

elite Cahokians ate more and better cuts of deer meat than ordinary Mississippians in the region.

This is not to say that the Mississippian government(s) was stable or strong. As one moved away from Cahokia, Mississippian groups were probably able to exercise greater and greater independence from Cahokian rule and were less obligated to provide Cahokia with labor or food. It has long been thought for instance that (based on the distribution of pottery styles) the Mississippians at the Pulcher site near Dupo (see Mini-Tour C) retained a great deal of autonomy from Cahokia through the early Mississippian Period.



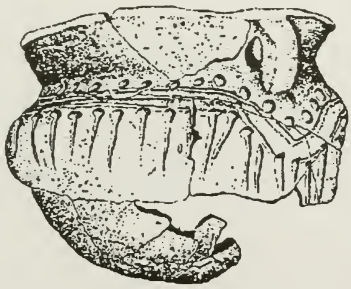
In any case, it did not take long for this sort of government by chiefs based on religious sanction to grow old and deteriorate. Archaeologists think that the region began to be depopulated after A.D. 1150, a mere 150 years after Mississippian political rule was first established over the region. By A.D. 1350, this emigration out of the flood plain seems to have been complete. It is not entirely clear why the region was abandoned. Undoubtedly, the system of government was unstable to begin with. A large palisade wall built around A.D. 1150 may be a sign of internal violent conflicts among high-ranking families. There probably had been many disputes and actual battles between elite factions for control over the government. It also is possible that prolonged problems in crop production or the availability of fire wood (among other things) might have contributed to the deterioration of the Mississippian civilization in Southwestern Illinois.

By A.D. 1350, there is evidence of the movement of non-Mississippians—called "Oneota" peoples—into Southwestern Illinois. Only three centuries later, the canoes of French traders would glide through the waters of the Mississippi River. The great cultural centers which had existed there before Columbus were gone.

ONEOTA AND PROTOHISTORIC PERIODS (A.D. 1350-1673)

The scattered clusters of storage pits, distinctive broken pots (like the fragment show below), and household refuse found in several locations around the Mississippi River flood plain are evidence that Oneota peoples moved into the region around A.D. 1350. These Oneota Indians seem to have consisted of small bands of hunter-farmers, not direct descendants of the Mississippians. Broken cooking pots, stone arrowheads, hide scrapers and food refuse make up the artifacts that archaeologists find on Oneota sites. Oneota archaeological sites include Cahokia near Highway 111 (see Mini-Tour A) and the Sponemann site (see Mini-Tour C).

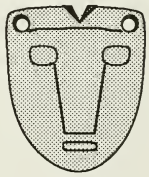
Unfortunately, archaeologists know little more about these people. De Soto and other early Spaniards did not venture into the Midwest. When Father Pere Marquette and Louis Jolliet journeyed through these parts in A.D. 1673, they found the sparse settlement of the Illiniwek. By 1699, when French missionaries founded a town called "Cahokia" (south of the Mississippian site), only one or two villages of Illini Indians called Southwestern Illinois home. With the continued colonial French settlement of the region—towns or forts at Kaskaskia, Chartres, Ste. Genevieve, Prairie du Rocher and St. Louis—the native population disappeared. The last of the wandering bands of displaced Indians passed through Southwestern Illinois in the early 1800s.



3
Archaeological Sites and Prehistoric Monuments to View and Visit

The lands of Southwestern Illinois really are an outdoor museum. It is appropriate then that we choose as a starting point for the Mini-Tours in this guide the **Interpretive Center** of the **Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site**. From this *indoor* museum starting point, you may select your outdoor tours.

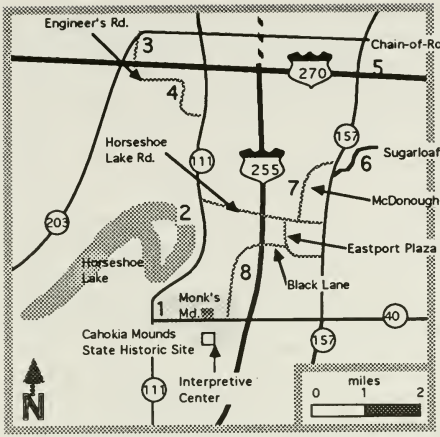
You may begin either with
Mini-Tour A
Mini-Tour C or
Mini-Tour D.



Points of interest are highlighted by consecutive numbers. In addition, detailed directions to follow are marked with this midcontinental native symbol known to archaeologists as the Long-Nosed God.

MINI-TOUR A:
The Greater Cahokia-Mounds Locale

Mini-Tour A includes stops 1-8 and begins at Cahokia Mounds. The Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center provides an excellent introduction from which to begin your tours. The **Cahokia** site is located at the heart of a large expanse of Mississippi River flood plain. The site is bisected by Interstate 55/70 and Highway 40, both of which pass by Monk's Mound, the largest prehistoric monument north of Mexico. A visit to this internationally-renown World Heritage Site and its impressive Interpretive Center is well worth the time. Mini-Tour A begins at the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center, providing a good introduction from which to begin your tour of the archaeology of southwestern Illinois using this guide. Plan to spend a full day



Mini-Tour A Map

there.

The Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center reveals an awesome story of Native-American civilization in North America at its peak. Dozens of gigantic mounds, along with their "borrow pits" (depressions from which the dirt was taken to build the mounds), surround tremendous open plazas. This was the seat of regional political power for most of the period A.D. 1000-1200. **Monks Mound**, the central flat-topped pyramid (below), towers 100 feet above

the surrounding site. It is the largest prehistoric monument in North America and was built in stages over a period of 150 years. A tremendous building would have stood on its summit, the home perhaps of the principal ruler of Cahokia.

A partially rebuilt palisade wall and a Woodhenge (like

England's "Stonehenge") have been found at Cahokia. The palisade was erected around A.D. 1150 and it took some 20,000 logs to build. It has been partially rebuilt just east of Monk's Mound to look as it did centuries ago. It lies east of Monk's Mound and north of the museum. The Woodhenge also has been rebuilt and is located west of Monk's Mound along Route 40.

Cahokia and Powell Mound—STOP #1

DIRECTIONS: From the entrance to the Cahokia Mounds Interpretive Center, travel west on Highway 40 (proceeding past Monk's Mound, other large mounds and the Woodhenge) nearly 2 miles until you reach Illinois Route 111. Turn north onto 111 toward Pontoon Beach and Mitchell, Illinois.

At the juncture of Routes 40 and 111, there is a large discount store which now rests over the spot where the second largest Indian mound at the Cahokia site once stood. Unfortunately, the "Powell Mound" (as it was known) was destroyed by a steam shovel in 1930. A large group of elite Mississippian burials were destroyed in the process, as recorded by onlookers at the time. Oneota remains—broken pots and chipped stone in a few scattered pits—also were found in the vicinity of the mound but not associated with it.

Traveling north along 111 (first passing under I-55/70), you find yourself skirting the edge of Horseshoe Lake to the west. This former channel of the Mississippi River was a source of abundant plant and animal resources for Native Americans. In these old river channels, myriad aquatic animal and plant life lived, much of it edible. Ducks, geese and swans would have landed on the large lake. Fish and turtles would have been plentiful. It was an attractive place to live particularly for Mississippians. In fact, a Mississippian town, home to one or more political officials and an unknown number of common Mississippian people, was located along the banks of Horseshoe Lake. This archaeological site now is located within the bounds of **Horseshoe Lake State Park**.

Horseshoe Lake Mound and Town—STOP #2

DIRECTIONS: About 3 miles north of Highway 40 along Route 111 is the entrance to Horseshoe Lake State Park. Turn west (left) into the Park. Follow the Park drive until the turn-off to

the boat launch, a gravel road which cuts sharply off of the main Park drive and follows the Lake edge north. Near a set of industrial buildings near the end of this road and just above the gravel lane opposite the lake is a grass and tree covered Mississippian mound.

The Horseshoe Lake mound is not easy to see and is covered in grass and trees. The mound and the site which surrounds it were inhabited sometime between about A.D. 1000 and 1200. Limited archaeological excavations on the mound have demonstrated that it was a flat-topped platform on which one or more important buildings rested. From this location, it is supposed, a Mississippian chief could have controlled the wealth of food resources of Horseshoe Lake and the surrounding farm fields. Ultimately, the rulers of Cahokia probably exerted control over these resources.

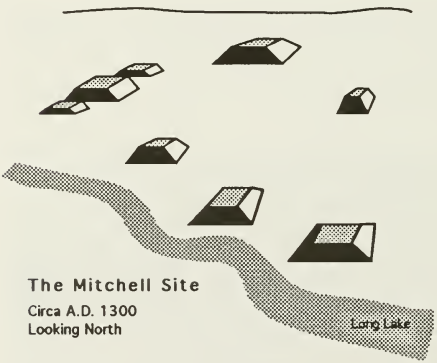
To the north of Horseshoe Lake, along the banks of Long Lake, lies another Mississippian town which may have rivaled Cahokia's power at about A.D. 1200. This site is known as **Mitchell**, and is found within the limits of the modern-day city of the same name.

The Mitchell Site—STOP #3

DIRECTIONS: Continue north on 111, passing through Pontoon Beach and driving up to and under the overpass of Interstate 270, 4 miles north of Horseshoe Lake State Park. Turn west (left) onto old Route 66 (also called "Chain-of-Rocks Road") and drive into the city of Mitchell, Illinois. Slightly more than 1 mile down

Chain-of-Rocks Road you pass Mitchell School. Immediately after this school and before you cross the railroad tracks, the Mississippian site of Mitchell lies to the south (left). Turn south (left) onto a paved street called Engineer's Road. In the cultivated field lies a single large mound. After viewing this mound, proceed down this road under the I-270 overpass and around two sharp bends in the road.

The single Mitchell-site mound is the sole remaining monument to the Mississippian Indians who lived here between A.D. 1000 and 1300. More than a dozen mounds were once found here. Most of these were arranged around a large open plaza just south of the mound you see in the field; most of this plaza now lies under I-270. Unfortunately, the three westernmost mounds were destroyed by Railroad construction during or before 1876. Three more were flattened by the construction of I-270 in 1963 and another three were destroyed by grading, borrowing and construction just south of I-270. This is the area adjacent to the lake and is visible if you follow Engineer's Road under I-270 as it bends to the east (left). Another mound, probably related to the Mitchell-site Mississippian town, may be observed from a distance about a mile down Engineer's Road.



The Mitchell Site
Circa A.D. 1300
Looking North

Outlying Mitchell Site Mound—STOP #4

DIRECTIONS: After passing under I-270, follow the road as it parallels the interstate and then turns sharply to the south (right). Look west (right) across the large field. A large old house sits atop a fairly large mound. At the stop sign, turn east

(left) and return to Route 111.

At this point in Mini-Tour A, you may either return to the Cahokia site via Route 111 and end your Mini-Tour, move onto Mini-Tour B, or continue on Mini-Tour A by returning to the Cahokia site via the bluff line to the east, viewing three other archaeological sites. To continue, follow these directions:

Kane Mounds and Cemeteries—STOP #5

DIRECTIONS: Turn north (left) onto Route 111 and then immediately take the on-ramp of I-270 East. (NOTE: You might instead choose to pass under I-270, turning east [right] onto Chain-of-Rocks Road). Follow this 3 miles to Illinois 157 (exit). Turn south (right) onto 157.

Here, at the eastern bluffs of the Mississippi River flood plain was a Native-American cemetery, called **Kane Mounds**, which dated to about A.D. 1200. It was found on the bluff crest over which the interstate now passes. In fact, the site was partically excavated to make way for I-270. This native cemetery lies adjacent to a cemetery of early Euro-American settlers which dates to the early 1800's (just north of I-270). The bluffs it seems were ideal cemetery sites, as also may be indicated by two large mounds to the south along Route 157.

Bluff-Top Mound Near McDonough Lake—STOP #6

DIRECTIONS: Proceed along the bluff base on Highway 157 approximately 3 miles at which point a wooded wetland, locally called McDonough Lake, will be visible to the west (right). 157 begins to bend toward the southeast (left) here and McDonough Lake Road intersects 157 from the west (right). Slow down and prepare to turn left onto the steeply-inclined Sugarloaf Road. Drive up the bluff on Sugarloaf Road until you reach the top.

Directly to your south at the edge of the bluffs is an enormous conical mound called **Fox Hill** or mound. This mound is approximately 20 feet high and, along with another mound located to the south but not visible from this vantage point, was speculated to have been an Indian "signal" mound. In 1909, local historian John Francis Snyder noted that:

"In the early settling of...the State [of Illinois] there was still plainly seen a well-worn [Indian] trail, or road, leading from...Cahokia...to the eastern bluffs, and up that ravine between the two lofty signal stations, and on through the timbered hills and across Silver Creek, to another square [Indian] mound in the western edge of Looking Glass prairie..."

The precise age of this conical tumulus and the other "signal station" mentioned by Snyder is not known, but they are suspected to have been built during the Mississippian Period and to be in some way related to prehistoric Cahokia, as the Indian trail would seem to suggest.

Another Bluff-Top Mound—STOP #7

DIRECTIONS: Return down Sugarloaf Road to 157, turning back north on 157 (the way you arrived) only long enough to turn west (left) onto McDonough Lake Road. McDonough Lake Road takes you out into the flood plain down by McDonough Lake itself. After about one-half mile and as soon as a good view of the bluff line is possible, slow down or stop and examine the bluffs. Just to the south of Sugarloaf Road where you just were may be seen the second of the large conical mounds on top of the bluff.

This second bluff-top mound, sometimes called **Sugarloaf**, is covered only by grass. Like the Fox Mound, Sugarloaf Mound is speculated to have been a signal mound. No archaeological excavations have resolved what purpose it served in prehistory. However, like the Kane Mounds to the north, it is possible that the two conical mounds on the bluffs are markers of Mississippian mortuary areas if not also "signal stations" as thought by Snyder. Such bluff top cemeteries are known to exist on the bluffs just east of Cahokia, one having been partially excavated where I-55/70 crosses the bluff line.

The final point of interest in this arm of your archaeological tour involves returning towards the Cahokia site. This last stop duplicates the first in that it seems to be another small Mississippian town located near the Cahokia site like the Horseshoe Lake site. It is called the **Bishop** site.

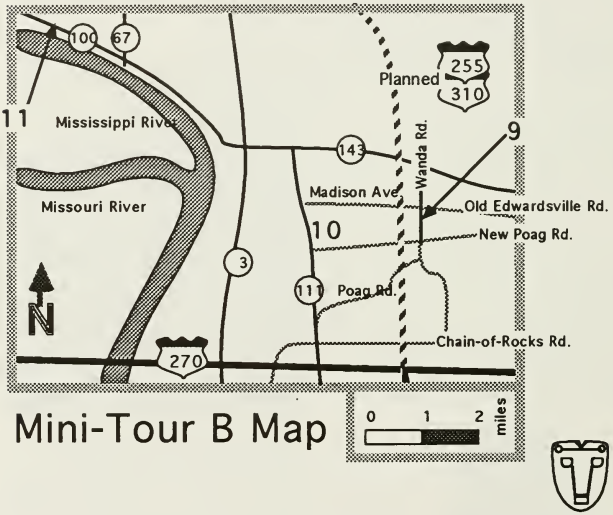
The Bishop Site and Mound—STOP #8

DIRECTIONS: Follow McDonough Lake Road another one-half mile to its intersection with Horseshoe Lake Road. Turn west (right) but go only about a quarter of a mile and then turn south (left) onto Eastport Plaza Drive. Follow Eastport Plaza Drive one-half of a mile and, as it bends east (left), turn right onto Black Lane. Follow Black Lane over I-255 about one-half of a mile beyond. Look east (left) and, when the field is not cropped, you can see a low mound. When plowed, the Bishop-site mound is black in color. To the west is an ancient channel of the Mississippi River and in historic times held a marsh known as Edelhardt Lake.

The Bishop-site mound is probably the remnants of a flat-topped Mississippian platform. During the Mississippian Period, a temple or the house of an important person would have stood on its summit. In all likelihood, this mound was part of a larger town, an outlier of the Cahokia site. Thanks to excavations at the **BBB Motor** and the **Sponemann** sites conducted prior to the construction of I-255, we know that other Mississippian houses and temples were located on the ridges which surround the Bishop mound. At least two of these temples contained small stone statues like the one shown to the left (5 inches high). You are only one-and-a-half miles away from the heart of the prehistoric Cahokia site itself. You may follow Black Lane back to Route 40 and the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site.

MINI-TOUR B:
The Roxana-Alton Segment

Mini-Tour B begins at the point where Mini-Tour A ended. It first takes you past two sites with mounds and ends at the site of the famous Piasa Bird north of the city of Alton along the Mississippi River. Your first stop is a mound which was probably built 17 or 18 centuries ago.



Mini-Tour B Map

A Woodland Mound Near Wanda—STOP #9

DIRECTIONS: We start on Illinois Route 111 northbound from Highway 40 to I-270. One mile north of I-270 on 111, Poag Road exits to the east (right). Unless you decide to avoid Stop #9, follow Poag Road to the right, continuing east (right) after the three-way intersection for approximately one and a half miles. Poag Road will go under the new extension of I-255 (I-310) and then pass up onto a large sandy hill or terrace meeting Wanda Road in a T-intersection. Continue north (left) about one half of a mile on Wanda Road, cross New Poag Road and travel 2 miles (parallel to the new interstate). At this point, about a quarter of a

mile south of Madison Avenue or Old Edwardsville Road, is a low cultivated mound adjacent to the eastern side of Wanda Road.

Unlike the mounds to the south in the Greater Cahokia-Site Locale, this **Wanda mound** is thought to date to the Middle Woodland Period. Other smaller mounds have been reported in the vicinity which also are thought to date to the Middle Woodland Period. The artifacts which have been recovered from these Woodland sites are similar in some ways to sites in the Illinois River Valley in western Illinois. In fact, this portion of the flood plain seems to have been home to a large number of Middle Woodland people. These were gardeners and hunters. They led what some might call a tribal existence.

Other Woodland-Period mounds, some of which may date to the Late Woodland Period, are located to the east of the Wanda mound. In fact, a row of some ten to twelve mounds was reported to exist in the city of South Roxana, now home to an oil refinery. These mounds were located next to Grassy Lake on the edge of the sandy terrace which you passed over on Poag Road.

South Roxana Mounds—STOP #10

DIRECTIONS: From the Wanda mound, turn west (left) onto Madison Avenue and travel a mile and a quarter between the Oil Refinery and the city of South Roxana about 15 blocks to Smith Street to the south. Turn south (left) and follow Smith Street 3 blocks to South Roxana Park. Two of the mounds remain in the **South Roxana Park**. Two more possible mounds—slightly more than rounded humps of the ground—may be seen on Park Street along the edge of the terrace about one-half of a city block away from the park. Smith Street ends in a T-intersection with Daniel Boone Street. After this stop, turn west (right) onto Daniel Boone Street and reconnect with Route 111.

The mounds at South Roxana Park remain something of a mystery since most have been destroyed without the benefit of archaeological study. Hopefully, the mounds which remain will not be disturbed by future developments in the area. From South Roxana Park, it is possible to journey further north about 12 miles to glimpse the reconstructed image of the famous **Piasa Bird** (pronounced "pie-a-saw"). This leg of the journey drops us

off immediately into the Protohistoric Period, after the Mississippian peoples had left southwestern Illinois.

The Piasa Monster—STOP #11

DIRECTIONS: From South Roxana Park, drive north on Illinois Route 111 three miles to Route 143. Turn west (left) on 143 and follow it 7 miles, past the intersection with Route 3, into the city of Alton, Illinois. Turn west (left) either onto Front Street or Broadway (Front Street runs into Broadway). Take Broadway, which turns into Route 100 and is also called "The Great River Road" north and out of the city of Alton. The Piasa Bird memorial is located 3 miles northwest of Alton alongside Route 100 opposite the Mississippi River in a bluffside nook.

In 1673 while canoeing down the Mississippi River, Father Pere Marquette and Louis Jolliet observed two hideous monsters painted on the limestone bluffs overlooking the Mississippi River. The Illini Indians typically shot arrows at the pictograph of the creature when they canoed past it. In his journal, Marquette recorded that each monster

> *"was as large as a calf with horns like a deer, red eyes, a beard like a tiger's, a face like a man, the body covered with green, red, and black scales, and a tail so long that it passed around the body, over the head and between the legs, ending like a fishes' tail."*

While later accounts (including an Illini Indian legend) embellished one monster to take on bird-like characteristics, the original monster as described by Marquette may have been none other than the "Water Panther" found in the myths of Algonquian Indian groups of the

"Water Panther" as incised on a prehistoric pot

upper Midwest. This same creature was depicted on a sherd of pottery from a site near Belleville (the pot itself probably originated from the upper Midwest). The painted Piasa pictograph on the Alton bluffs probably dated to the Oneota and Protohistoric Period, since this creature seems to have been virtually unknown in Mississippian art.

The Piasa Bird plaque on the bluff northwest of Alton is the final stop in Mini-Tour B. However, you may find other points of interest in the architecture of Elsah, Illinois, further upriver along Route 100 or in the downtown and bluff-top scenic overlooks of Alton. At this point, it is possible to begin Mini-Tour C.

TO MINI-TOUR C

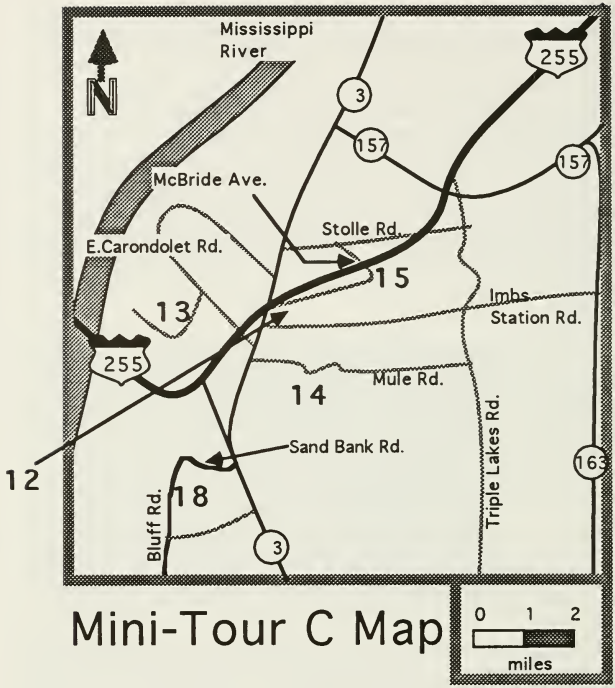
DIRECTIONS: Return south to Alton along Route 100—the Great River Road—to Illinois 143, taking this south to Route 3. Turn south (right) onto Route 3 and travel 7 miles to I-270. Turn onto I-270 East and proceed past the Mitchell site 4-and-one-half miles to I-255. Take this south (toward Memphis) in order to begin Mini-Tour C.

MINI-TOUR C:
I-255 South and the Columbia-Dupo Area

In Mini-Tour C, you travel south along I-255 and into the southern flood plain and upland hills. The first portion of the Mini-Tour consists of points of interest along I-255. Stops #12-15 stray from I-255 and feature everything from Archaic-Period base camps to Mississippian mounds. If you are beginning here, start at the junction of I-270 and I-255 (see map).

DRIVING SOUTH ALONG I-255

The first point of interest is passed about 2 miles south (of I-270) on I-255. To the east (left) are two large borrow pit lakes which were dug in the 1980s to obtain sand for the building of I-255. Before the lakes were dug, however, some of the oldest archaeological remains in the flood plain were found here at what archaeologists called the **Nochta** site. There were Early Archaic-Period projectile points and knives in numbers which



Mini-Tour C Map

suggest that the site had been reused by Archaic-Period hunters and gatherers as a seasonal place to live for many years.

Three more miles south (of I-270) on I-255, and just south of the Horseshoe Lake Road exit, three archaeological sites were excavated where the highway now runs. At the **Holding** site, archaeologists found the remains of living areas, houses, and garbage of Middle Woodland-Period families who lived in a small community. There may even have been a small mound located nearby, since erased by the hands of time, where the important Middle-Woodland dead would have been laid to rest.

Ten centuries later, there were Mississippian houses and temple buildings scattered throughout this area. Nearby was the **Bishop mound**, which can be seen (during the fall through

spring seasons) in the open field to the west of I-255 as you pass the I-55/St. Louis exit (see Mini-Tour A for more information). And the great Mississippian center of **Cahokia** was located only a-mile-and-a-half away in the direction of the setting sun.

Continuing south on I-255, you pass the Collinsville Road exit (#24) to Cahokia Mounds and you pass open fields of some of the most fertile farm land in the flood plain. The upland bluffs and hills may be seen off to the east (left). These bluffs seem to have been a hallowed place to bury the dead, as indicated by the skeletal remains which, in many locations, have been disturbed by modern urban development.

As you ascend an overpass just south of exit #24, you may see **Monks Mound** to the northwest (right), jutting up above the plain just as it would have done during the Mississippian times. Only then, fewer trees and houses probably would have interferred with the view. Monks Mound easily would have been visible as far south as exit #20 (along I-255) where another sizable Mississippian community existed along the banks of a former lake.

Many changes have occurred to the landscape since the Mississippian Indians left the region. Lakes have been drained, fields plowed, modern industry and cities built. It is in tribute, though, to our Native-American forebearers that the bridges and overpasses of I-255 display concrete inlays replicating the Mississippian symbol of the Bird-Man, shown here. The original was a small stone tablet found beside Monks Mound at Cahokia. The modern concrete versions may be seen on an overpass before exit #17.

Before you reach exits #17A and #17B, you pass through a low-lying swampy area of ridges and swales. This environmental zone, the Goose Lake meander which is in part preserved as Frank Holton State Park, looks not too different from what it looked like centuries ago. Along the edge of Goose Lake, there was a large Mississippian community which had a central mound, on which probably was the house of or the temple maintained by a local chief. This is called the **Lohmann site**. While the mound is now gone, you may drive past the Lohmann site (as an option) by exiting at 17B. Another option includes exiting at #17A and proceeding two miles to the top of the bluffs

where one may drive through the world famous **Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows.**

Exits #17A and #17B—OPTIONAL STOPS

DIRECTIONS: You may drive past the Lohmann site by taking Exit 17B and traveling about a mile to the first stop light. The site and the mound (destroyed about 1940) lay under and along Route 15 to the north (right). Returning to the east via Route 15 (or having exited at #17A) will carry you up the bluffs, at the top of which is located the entrance to the Shine of Our Lady of the Snows. The Shrine, besides being a modern religious monument, can give one a glimpse of the upland terrain of the bluff top. These bluffs would have been used throughout prehistory for nut-collecting, living, and burial sites.

Continuing south on I-255, you pass expansive open farm fields (around mile #15). Scattered prehistoric remains, including small Mississippian farmsteads, were excavated in this area prior to the building of I-255. After you pass exit #13 (Route 157-Cahokia), you will notice that the bluffs to the east (left) suddenly move closer to you and become beautiful vertical cliffs of solid limestone. A number of large limestone quarries operate in these bluffs. By exit #10 the vertical limestone bluffs loom high along the eastern horizon. Later in this Mini-Tour, you will travel right up to these bluffs.

The flood plain has narrowed in this area and, perhaps in part for this reason, Native-American archaeological remains are concentrated here. At mile #10, the highway swings close to the limestone bluffs along the fringe of old Prairie Lake. Under this stretch of highway on the banks of Prairie Lake, a series of large and complex Late Woodland and Emergent Mississippian villages were excavated—the famous **Range site**. Between about A.D. 600 to 950, the Range site was occupied by a few to as many as a hundred households...farming, fishing, and collecting the natural bounty of the land. These Range-site people probably were closely allied to those of a nearby Emergent Mississippian and Mississippian-Period town with mounds. This site, called **Pulcher**, dominates the archaeological landscape of this part of the flood plain. Before you arrive at this site, however, you may view three other points of interest. One of these is a bluff-top mound which may be related to the flood plain mounds and town at the Pulcher site. The bluff-top mound, like one men-

tioned earlier, is called "Sugarloaf."

The Sugarloaf Mound of the South—STOP #12

DIRECTIONS: Take Exit 9 and get off of I-255. Turn left onto old Route 3 and go straight past the 255 turnoff. Just ahead you will see the road trim the base of the bluff and, during the winter through spring time, the limbs of the bare trees on top of this jutting segment of bluff will reveal a large conical mound, also called the **Sugarloaf Mound** (of the south). You might choose to drive up the residential streets behind the mound for a closer look but remember not to trespass or enter private drives.

If you walk over to the bluff or examine it closely from your vehicle, you will see that the rock layers which make up the bluff are not horizontally-oriented. That is, they are not lying flat. Instead, they are tilted, dipping downward at their western edge. This is an unusual geological feature for this part of Illinois—part of the Waterloo Anticline—to which we will return in Stop #14.

The next point of interest may be seen just prior to reaching the Pulcher site. The **Go-Kart North** site lies along the base of the bluffs and adjacent to old Route 3. It dates to the Late Archaic period. It is thought to have been a base camp for a number of families over a fairly short period of time. Plant and animal remains found in pits below the surface demonstrate that white-tailed deer and nuts were staples of the diet.

Go-Kart North and the Pulcher Site—STOP #13

DIRECTIONS: Continue south on old Route 3 for one-half mile and turn west (right) away from the bluffs onto East Carondolet Road. As you pass over I-255, you also are passing over the Go-Kart North site.

After less than a mile (and after crossing over railroad tracks), turn south (left) onto Oklahoma Hill Road. Now, an Indian mound lies out in the field to the west next to the tree line. And after passing through a low-lying area, you drive up a slight rise that is locally called Oklahoma Hill. To your left is another mound and, as you pass houses on the right, look for more mounds out in the field to the west. There are two such sizeable tumuli. If you continue on the road around a sharp bend to the west, you can get a close-up photograph of the southernmost mound.

Like other Mississippian mounds, those at the Pulcher site probably were flat-topped foundations for important homes or temples. This site is well known to archaeologists because it was, like the Cahokia site, a place where a large number of people lived and where important leaders resided and administered to the general populace of the area, perhaps including the folks who lived at the Range site. There is much to be learned by

careful and controlled archaeological study of this site and, fortunately, it remains in farmland. Currently, this part of the bottom is undergoing rapid urban development. Hopefully, the future of the Pulcher site does not include being made into an industrial park or a department store.

The uplands above the bluffs also may be threatened by uncontrolled urban development. The hills beyond the flood plain to the west look much like they did a hundred years ago. Large tracts of forest and farmland coexist now where in the distant past, Paleo-Indians, Archaic, Woodland and Mississippian-Period natives roamed through vast stands of hardwood timber. These hills are worth a visit.

The Mule Road Bluff Top and Waterloo Anticline—STOP #14
DIRECTIONS: Return to old Route 3 from the Pulcher site. Turn south (right) for only a block or so and then turn east (left) on Mule Road as it steeply ascends the bluffs. Be cautious and use vehicle's low gear if needed. Atop the bluffs, Mule Road twists and turns but there are a number of vistas of the uplands and the flood plain to be had. Pull over with care and be prepared to catch your breath! When finished, continue driving east on Mule Road.

To the south of the crest of the bluff you have just climbed lies gentle slopes and secondary ridges upon which were excavated the **George Reeves** and **Dohack** sites. Late Archaic and Late Woodland artifacts and storage or cooking pits were found scattered across these sites, indicating at least a short-term residential usage of these hills. The remains of the houses of Emergent Mississippian and Mississippian houses also were found on these hills. About 3 to 5 or more houses would have occupied the ridge slopes—families farming and collected wild plant and animal foods—as archaeologists discovered by excavating the George Reeves and Dohack sites.

To the east of the bluff edge, the road climbs a gigantic ridge which almost seems to be part of the bluff. This is known to geologists as the Waterloo Anticline, a huge swelling of the bedrock in this part of the uplands. Actually, this geological feature is the beginning of the Ozarks to the west in Missouri, which also consists of numerous anticlines. The Waterloo Anticline was formed millions of years ago, a bending of the

earth's crust which brought the old solid deposits of limestone nearer to the surface. Oil and gas also are brought to the surface along the anticline and some oil wells can be seen in the vicinity. In fact, the vertical cliffs of limestone and the narrowness of the flood plain noted earlier which you saw as you drove south along I-255 is there because of the Waterloo Anticline. Around the sides of the anticline, the bedrock is tilted. This tilt is exactly what you saw beneath the Sugarloaf Mound of the south, as mentioned at Stop #12.

About a mile along on Mule Road, you will notice numerous large circular depressions scattered in the fields around you, some filled with water, some covered in trees. These are sink holes, a geological feature of this area where the soft underlying limestone has eroded and left caverns beneath the ground. Archaic and Woodland-Period artifacts have been found around some of these sink holes, perhaps because they were favorite watering holes for certain animals or places to trap waterfowl during their annual migration. Around a few of these sink holes, there is an abundance of a kind of sharp rock called chert used to make projectile points and other cutting tools by Indians. It would seem in fact that some prehistoric Indians ventured down into those sink holes which were open down into the caverns beneath the ground. These Native Americans thus were prehistoric spelunkers or cave explorers.

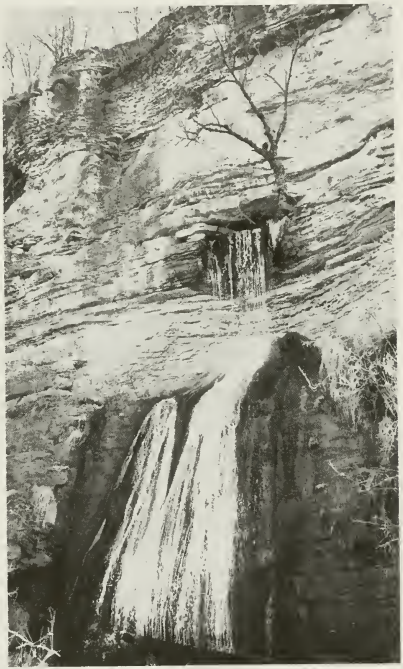
Most of the underground caverns in this area contain streams and can be quite dangerous to the unexperienced. One such stream issues out of these caverns on the side of the bluffs and was known through prehistory. The early French and American peoples in region called this water falling out of the side of the bluff **Falling Springs**.

Falling Springs—STOP #15

DIRECTIONS: Mule Road meets Triple Lakes Road in a T intersection after about 2 miles. At the intersection, turn north (left). Follow Triple Lakes Road past a four-way intersection with Imbs Station Road (which if you turn left will take you back to old Route 3) and down the bluff again, a total distance of about 4 miles. Stay left at the intersection at the base of the bluffs and follow Stolle Road for about 2 miles to McBride Avenue, passing below I-255 in the process. Turn south (left) and follow it for about a mile all the way to the bluff base, then following LePere Lane alongside the bluff base to Falling Springs

Drive. At this point you are adjacent to Falling Springs issuing forth from the bluffs.

Here at Falling Springs, a large Archaic-Period base camp existed and seems to have been regularly used for many years. No doubt the spring was the primary draw for people and animals. The location may even have had sacred importance to native peoples as such places very frequently do. It also was a well-known landmark to the French and early Euroamericans in the region. Even today, Falling Springs remains awe inspiring.



At this point, Mini-Tour C ends. Mini-Tour D may be begun, starting from the intersection of I-255 and I-64 as described below. Mini-Tours A and B also may be begun from this location. A final option is to drive south along Bluff Road starting from old Route 3 or I-255 South as described in Mini-Tour E.

To Mini-Tour D: You may return to I-255 by following McBride Avenue and Stolle Road back to the Y-intersection, this time keeping left and traveling across a bridge (rather than going up the bluffs on Triple Lakes Road). Take the on-ramp for I-255 north by proceeding straight through the first intersection.

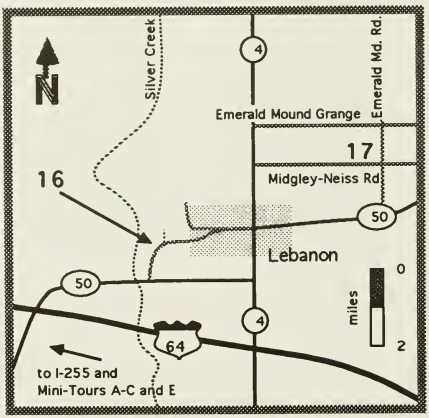
To Mini-Tour D or Mini-Tour E: Alternatively, beginning at Falling Springs, follow Falling Springs Drive as it bends south along a wetland skirting alongside I-255 until the drive meets old Route 3 and the on-ramp for I-255. To go on to Mini-Tour D (or Mini-Tours A or B) take I-255 North. To go on to Mini-Tour E, follow old Route 3 (or I-255) south (again, past Sugarloaf Mound).

MINI-TOUR D: EMERALD MOUND AND THE SILVER CREEK VALLEY

Mini-Tour D takes you past two principal Mississippian sites in the Silver Creek valley 15 miles east of the Mississippi River flood plain. To begin this leg of your journey, it is easiest to follow I-64 East.

The Pfeffer Site—STOP #16

DIRECTIONS: If you begin at Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, follow Route 40 east to I-255. Take I-255 South a total of 4 miles to I-64 (Exit 20). Get on I-64 East and follow this for about 15 miles to the Route 4 Exit. Exit here and turn north on Route 4, following this for 3 miles to the primary four-way intersection in the heart of Lebanon, Illinois, located on a prominent hill. Turn west (left) and follow the main street through the historic district of town, keeping left at the Y-intersection one-half mile along. As you reach the crest of a hill



Mini-Tour D Map

lined with houses and just prior to following a southward (left) bend in the road, look to the north (right). There, in a grass lawn sets an Indian mound on what archaeologists call the **Pfeffer site.**

While barely perceptible due to the houses which surround it, this mound appears to rise from the center of what was probably a large Mississippian village on the high hill which now holds the town of Lebanon. This site shows that a large number of people lived outside of Cahokia and the Mississippi River flood plain. It is, however, small when compared to an even bigger and more impressive Mississippian site only a few miles to the northeast. There lies the **Emerald site.**

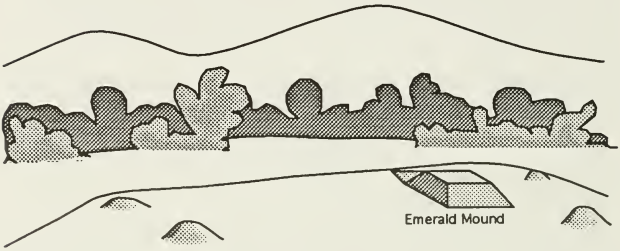
The Emerald Mound and Town Site—STOP #17

DIRECTIONS: Return to the central four-way stop in Lebanon and turn left, following Route 4 to the north. Two-and-a-half miles from this intersection, turn east (right) onto Emerald Mound Grange Road. Follow this for one-and-a-half miles, keeping watch out the passenger window for the large hill to the south. On this hill lies the mounds of the Emerald site. You may turn right onto Emerald Mound Road and after a mile take another right onto Midgley-Neiss Road to encircle the Emerald site. You may obtain a good view of the mounds from these paved roads. The gravel road up the hill itself is a private drive.

The Emerald site at one time contained at least six mounds. Three are visible today, two of which are small rises along the western portion of the ridge. The third mound is a large flat-topped pyramid which stands about 20 feet high. This makes it the highest Mississippian mound in southwestern Illinois outside of Cahokia. Ever since the first European pioneers crossed the prairie that covered these hills, they saw this mound as a prehistoric jewel—green, rectangular and faceted—and called it Emerald Mound. In 1909, John Francis Snyder described it as follows:

> *"Known in early pioneer days as the Emerald mound because of its dark green color in spring and summer seasons, it was a conspicuous and attractive object in plain view for many miles to the northeast and southward."*

"It is the most perfect and best preserved mound of its class in the State; a truncated pyramid in form, approximately true mathematical proportions, each line of its quadrilateral base measuring almost exactly 300 feet, and its level top 150 feet square. Its height is within a few inches of 50 feet rising from the ground surface on each side with the even grade of a modern railroad embankment."



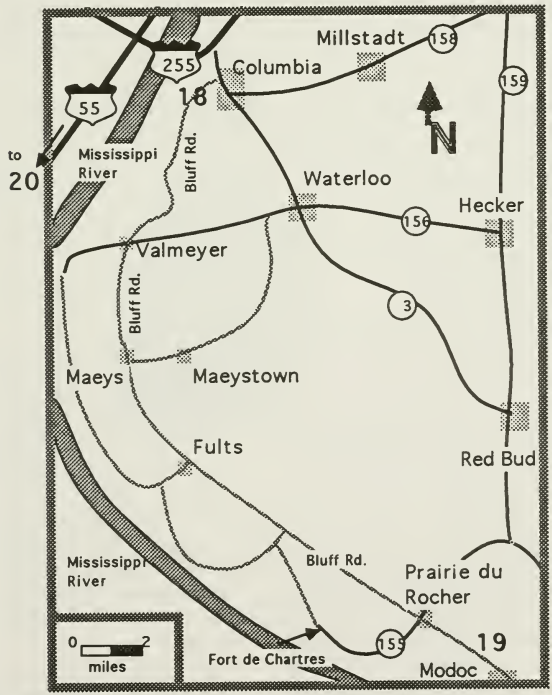
The Emerald Mound and Town Site
View to North

The mound suffered severely when its southern quarter was destroyed by a landowner in the mid-1960s who sold the dirt for fill. Fortunately, the state of Illinois purchased the mound at that time and saved what remained from also being destroyed.

Of all the sites which you will have toured using this guide, the Emerald site remains the most mysterious. Archaeologists know very little about how many Native-American people lived at this site or at sites in the surrounding area. It does seem likely that, just as farmers do today, the Mississippian Indians of six to nine centuries ago found the Silver Creek valley fertile and productive for growing corn, squash, and other crops. They were in close contact with the Cahokia peoples as indicated by the historically-documented foot trail, but may have remained semi-independent of Cahokia's rule. Like the inhabitants of the flood plain, those people of the Silver Creek valley seem to have left the region by about A.D. 1350.

MINI-TOUR E:
THE BLUFF ROAD, MODOC ROCK SHELTER AND MASTODON STATE PARK

Mini-Tour E includes two archaeological stops in Illinois and an optional stop at Kimmswick, Missouri to see Mastodon State Park. The Illinois trip ends at Modoc Rock Shelter and is primarily a scenic driving tour of the bluffs. You begin Mini-Tour E at the end of Mini-Tour C, or on I-255 South in the vicinity of Dupo, Illinois. The option of going to Mastodon State Park is explained as Stop #20.

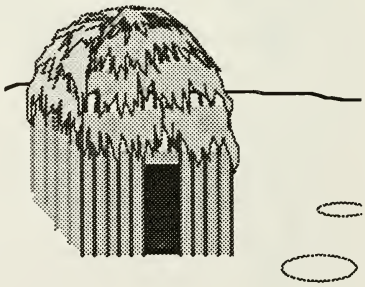


Mini-Tour E Map

DIRECTIONS: Proceed south on I-255 until Route 3 exits to Columbia (about 2 miles south of Dupo). Exit (left) I-255 at this point before it bends west and passes into Missouri. There are a number of ways to get to the Bluff Road which lies to your west. At the stop light where Route 3 intersects Sand Bank Road, turn right (see also Mini-Tour C map).

At this point on Sand Bank Road, you are atop the bluffs once again. At this very location, archaeologists found scattered Archaic-Period pits which seem to have been used for steaming, roasting, and perhaps storing certain foods, perhaps nuts, seeds, and fruits. The bluff top location may have been hospitable only certain times of the year, like summer. The Archaic remains are sparse.

Likewise, Late Woodland and Emergent Mississippian remains found on this bluff top site also seem to hint at a restricted seasonal use of this prominent hill. At least one and perhaps two or three small huts were found here, called the **Joan Carrie site**, like those excavated in the large villages of the Range site not too far away. However, evidence found in pits and with likely hut remains include burned roof thatch in which was found hundreds of mud-dauber wasp nests.



It appears, in other words, that a hut may have been built, left to set for a while (a year?), taken over by mud-daubers and then cleaned up or burned by people again. This may mean that the roof was taken off and burned because of all the wasps which were living in it. Perhaps then a new roof was added and it was again used for a short period.

Now, we shall continue down the bluff face and onto Bluff Road.

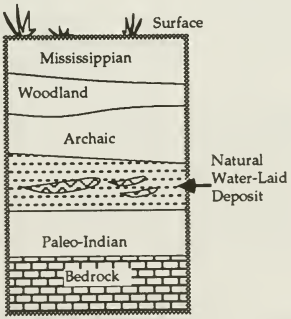
DIRECTIONS: Follow Sand Bank Road down the bluff to the paved road at the base. This is Bluff Road and continues south through Monroe and Randolph Counties for approximately 35 miles to Modoc Rock Shelter. With a few jogs in the road notwithstanding, Bluff Road closely parallels the base of the steep limestone bluffs which reach heights of 200 feet above the flood plain.

About 10 miles south of Columbia and Route 3, where you began, Bluff Road skirts the edge of Moredock lake, an old remnant channel of the Mississippi River. You can see an excellent example of a near-pristine marsh environment including animals like waterfowl, herons, egrets, and aquatic reptiles and amphibians. In about three miles you reach Valmeyer.

Proceeding south of Valmeyer for about another 6 miles you pass the town of Maeystown Station. While barely visible now, a Mississippian town with mounds existed in the vicinity of the modern town. Another 6 miles brings you to the town of Fults and in about 8 more miles you arrive in Prairie du Rocher, founded by early French colonists and associated with the historic French Fort of Chartres—a state park open to the public—located only about 4 miles away in the flood plain nearer the present Mississippi River.

If you stay on the Bluff Road south of Prairie du Rocher, you will pass **Modoc Rock Shelter** in 2 miles, just after crossing over a small creek flowing out of the bluffs from the uplands. Modoc Rock Shelter is not a cave, but a huge overhanging section of sandstone bluffs. A small plaque marks this internationally-famous site. The town of Modoc lies another couple of miles further south.

Modoc Rock Shelter is a buried site containing the remains of Indians from as early as the Early Archaic Period down through the



Example of a Stratified Archaeological Deposit

ages to the Mississippian Period. What makes this site special is the fact that it is layered or stratified much like a layer cake or the layers of rock under the earth. The oldest archaeological remains are on the bottom. The youngest remains are on top. After many years of flooding and the piling up of sediments from the uplands by way of the small creek nearby, the floor of the rock shelter would be buried. Another occupation or group of people would then, at a later date, live under the rock shelter, leaving behind their garbage, pits, and forgotten possessions. Later floods and siltation would then bury these more recent remains, and so on and on through the centuries until today. So, the oldest archaeological remains at the Modoc Rock Shelter are more than ten feet deep below the surface!

At this point, Mini-Tour E has ended. It is of course possible to explore further on your own along the Bluff Road further to the south. There is a wealth of things historic and natural to see in the area. Fort Kaskaskia and the French Colonial house of Pierre Menard (open to the public) lie to the south in Randolph County near Chester, Illinois. Fort de Chartres lies near Prairie du Rocher as earlier mentioned.

Also, you may choose to venture into Missouri. The quaint town of Ste. Genevieve contains numerous historic French Colonial houses and cafes which exemplify the early French and German immigrants in the region. Furthermore, there exists one very important archaeological site near Kimmswick, Missouri, which may be visited. Here, at **Mastodon State Park**, Paleo-Indian tools and spear points were found imbedded in the skeletal remains of prehistoric elephants or mastodons.

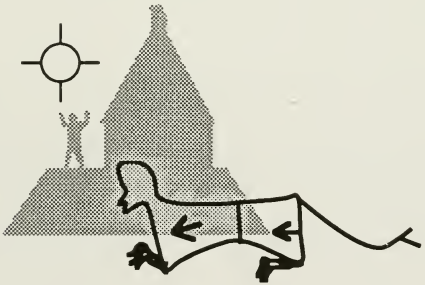
Mastodon State Park—STOP #20

DIRECTIONS: Begin on I-255 heading south where you exited on Route 3 (exit #6) for Stop #18. Rather than getting off of I-255 onto Route 3, however, stay on I-255 as it crosses the Mississippi River into Missouri. Take I-55 south about 3 miles from where you began and follow this for about 10 miles to the exit to Kimmswick and Mastodon State Park, as directed by signs.

As interpreted within the Park, mastodons—prehistoric North American elephants—have been found in this area at the bases of rocky slopes and bluff edges. In a manner like the

Modoc Rock Shelter, the archaeological remains were buried. Among the skeletal remains of these prehistoric elephants were the unmistakeable tools and weapons of Paleo-Indian hunters, who seem to have killed and butchered the mastodons here.

And so, we end here, at the beginning of human prehistory some 10 to 12 thousand years ago. You have worked your way back through time, from the Oneota and Mississippian remains at the gigantic site of Cahokia, to the simple bones and tools of Paleo-Indians and their now-extinct prey. It is much to contemplate, much to understand. And it is important for you to decide why it is worth contemplating and understanding, because making sense of the past can help you make sense of the present and perhaps even the future.



4
Making Sense of the Past

Archaeologists have been searching for answers to questions about why Cahokia collapsed, why the Mississippian peoples vacated Southwestern Illinois, and how and why the civilizing process occurred in the first place in this part of the world. Archaeologists have been seeking to find out about the Woodland-Period peoples who preceded the Mississippians, why agriculture was intensified during this period, why a tribal lifestyle evolved, and ultimately how powerful leaders and a complex Mississippian society emerged out of these Woodland cultures. Lastly, since the Woodland and Mississippian cultures were descended from the Archaic-Period and Paleo-Indian cultures which went before them, archaeologists are interested in knowing how these early Native Americans lived and how their hunting and food-collecting ways of life gradually changed. The Paleo-Indian gatherers and hunters and their Archaic descendants lived on the same landforms that you do today, but they did so in a way that was so very different than you.

It is useful to us in our modern civilization to gain a perspective on the diversity of past lifestyles. Our civilization is certainly not the only way to live. Who is to say whether or not it is the best way? You can decide these things for yourself *if* you have knowledge about other cultures, other civilizations and other times. As was stated in Chapter 1, you may and should answer for yourself the questions: How does understanding the past help us to better understand our own present? How can we take care of our environment? How do culture and politics change and how do civilizations rise and fall?

If answers to these questions matter to you, then you may agree that we must care for and understand the past just as we care for and understand the present. Like an unknown tropical plant in the Amazon rainforest from which some life-saving medicine could be discovered, archaeological sites can and do provide us with answers to questions about people, culture and civilization, and about how people can or cannot get

along with each other and with nature. We may not even be aware of some critical bits of cultural information until it is found at archaeological sites, bits of information which might assist us in understanding ourselves and the incredibly diverse cultures around the world now and in the past.

And if we do not care for the past, and if archaeological sites are looted or destroyed by greedy treasure seekers, modern urbanism, industrial development or other kinds of "progress," then we may never know what we have lost. The voices of history and prehistory will have been made dumb, and us with them. If we forget our Native-American forebearers, if we ignore the ways our ancestors lived, if we lay waste to what remains of the places they lived and the things they did, then surely they have lived in vain. And we, the inheritors of their worlds, have lost much of the color of life and the diversity of our own world, a diversity which may prove to be quite important as we move through the 21st century.

Acknowledgements

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Illustration Credits

The Archaic stone tools on page 7 are adapted from American Bottom Archaeology, published by the University of Illinois Press. The Oneota pot on page 13 was adapted from a drawing by Linda Alexander of the University of Illinois.

Want to do something to help?

Speak out about preserving archaeological sites or historical landmarks to your state congressional officials in Springfield and your national congressional representatives in Washington. Certain state and federal agencies are relatively small and your single voice can be heard and can make a difference.

Contact the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency or an Archaeology laboratory or Department of Anthropology at a University near you if you see acts of vandalism or the looting of prehistoric monuments or archaeological sites. Let your city council know of your concern about native cultures and prehistoric remains if it is planning or permitting urban developments, industrial parks or land modifications.

Organize letter-writing campaigns or protests to the destruction of cultural or natural areas and archaeological remains by private corporations or public institutions.

Encourage local schools—public or private, elementary, middle, junior high or above (even college-level)—to adopt a cirriculum which explores cultural diversity, prehistory, and Native American lifeways.

Participate in archaeological research or in museum interpretation. A number of possibilities exist to join in scientific research teams or to volunteer in the work of museums. Contact your local University, the Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, or the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site.

Educate yourself about history and prehistory at your local library, University, or Museum.

Want to know more?

Here are some books to look for:

American Bottom Archaeology, edited by Charles J. Bareis and James W. Porter, University of Illinois Press, Urbana (1984).

Cahokia and the Hinterlands: Middle Mississippian Cultures of the Midwest, edited by Thomas E. Emerson and R. Barry Lewis. University of Illinois Press, Urbana (1991).

The Cahokia Atlas: A Historical Atlas of Cahokia Archaeology by Melvin Fowler. Studies in Illinois Archaeology 6. Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Springfield (1989).

Calumet and Fleur-de-lys: Archaeology of Indian and French Contact in the Midcontinent, edited by John A. Walthall and Thomas E. Emerson. Smithsonian Institution Press (1992).

John Francis Snyder: Selected Writings, edited by Clyde C. Walton, Illinois State Historical Society, Springfield (1962).

Prehistoric Mound Builders of the Mississippi Valley, edited by James B. Stoltman. The Putnam Museum (1986).

Other publications on sites referenced:

American Bottom Archaeology, FAI-270 Site Reports, published by the University of Illinois Press:

#6	The BBB Motor Site
#9	The Go-Kart North & the Dyroff and Levin Sites
#12	The Dohack Site
#15	The George Reeves Site
#19	The Holding Site
#16, 20	The Range Site
#21	The Nochta Site
#23, 24	The Sponemann Site, volumes 1 and 2
#25	The Lohmann Site

Here are additional places to visit:

Cahokia Courthouse, First and Elm Streets, Cahokia, IL 62206 (phone 618-332-1782). Constructed in 1737, this was a French residence which was converted into a courthouse for the Northwest Territory until 1814. Located along Route 3 where Route 157 intersects it in Cahokia, Illinois.

Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site, P.O. Box 681, Collinsville, IL 62234 (phone 618-346-5160). see description in Mini-Tour A.

Fort de Chartres, R.R. #2, Prairie du Rocher, IL 62277 (phone 618-284-7230). Built in the early 1700s, this is a massive fortress which enclosed around 4 acres. It was abandoned in 1772. Located 4 miles west of Prairie du Rocher on Route 155.

Fort Kaskaskia, R.R. #1, Box 63, Ellis Grove, IL 62241 (phone 618-859-3741). This was a French fort built to protect the French townspeople of Kaskaskia during the Seven Years War. It was dismantled around 1766. Located 6 miles north of Chester and reached via Route 3.

Pierre Menard Home, R.R. #1, Box 58, Ellis Grove, IL 62241 (phone 618-859-3031). A pristine example of French Colonial architecture in the Mississippi Valley built in the early 1800s. Located at the base of the bluffs atop which sits Fort Kaskaskia.

For additional information on Illinois historic sites, contact:

Illinois Historic Preservation Agency
Division of Public Affairs and Development
Old State Capitol, Springfield, IL 62701
phone 217-782-4836

Illinois Bureau of Tourism
Department of Commerce &Community Affairs
620 East Adams Street,Springfield, IL 62701
phone 1-800-ABE-0121

Glossary

artifact. An object made by human hands or modified through human use.

atlatl. A stick about a forearm's length with a hook on one end which fits into a socket on the end of a spear. It is used to throw the spear, giving it a catapult-like thrust.

bluffs. The steep escarpment which borders a flood plain, delimiting the bounds of a meandering river.

Cahokia. A huge prehistoric site covering some 5 or 6 square miles and dating between A.D. 850-1400. Also, a modern city to the south of the prehistoric site, settled in A.D. 1699 as a mission to groups of the Illini Indians calling themselves the "Cahokia" and "Tamaroa."

chert. A sharp stone (also called "flint") found in limestone beds which can be chipped or shaped into cutting tools or projectile tips.

chiefs. Hereditary leaders who occupy prestigious political, social and religious offices within a hierarchical government(s) underlain by a socially ranked series of families or kin groups.

chunkey. A Native-American game played in an open courtyard by rolling a stone disc at or near a pole and sometimes attempting to stop the disc or guess the point at which the stone will stop.

elite. Those people with unequal access to positions of political power or of such high social standing as to separate them from the ordinary folk, giving them unequal access to important goods or services of the society.

Illiniwek. An Algonquian-Indian ethnic group which occupied the present state of Illinois during the 17th century; the name literally means "the men."

Long-Nosed God. A Mississippian icon which consists of a face with characteristic round eyes, simple mouth and elongate nose, an incised line across the forehead and a bifurcated headdress. These icons usually took the form of ear ornaments and were perforated in either corner for attachment. The mythical significance of this icon is not certain.

maize. Corn, particularly the original Native-American varieties.

Monk's Mound. The largest prehistoric earthen monument in North America outside of Mexico. It has a height of 100 feet and includes four flat terraces in its final form. It was constructed in numerous incremental stages during the Mississippian Period. Its flat terraces each supported one or more buildings, some of them exceedingly large.

occupation. A spatially and temporally-isolatable use of a particular site. We may speak of a Paleo-Indian occupation of some site, or the Emergent Mississippian occupation of the Cahokia site, etc.

palisade wall. A defensive wall of upright logs and bastians encircling some location.

pits. Subterranean holes (usually less than three feet wide and deep) dug for use as cooking ovens, roasting places, and storage bins and often filled with garbage after they are abandoned.

plaza. A large rectangular courtyard which serves as the location of public gatherings and ritual events.

sink hole. A geological feature where underground erosion of soft bedrock beneath harder bedrock leads to caverns which open up to the surface in the form of gigantic natural pits. These sinks sometimes clog and form small circular ponds.

stratified. A situation where older archaeological or geological features like layers of rock, human garbage, or the like are stacked one atop another such that the oldest deposit is at the bottom.

treasure seeker or hunter. An individual who digs or otherwise damages archaeological sites in order to remove artifacts for personal gain or gratification.

tribal. a kind of social organization characterized by decentralized kinship networks and general equality among individuals and groups.

Waterloo Anticline. A folding or bending of the earth's crust across the western part of Monroe and St. Clair Counties, Illinois, visible in the dipping rocks of the bluffs or as a large ridge in the uplands.

Woodhenge. The remains of a circular arrangement of large posts (up to 48) dating to the Mississippian Period. The locations of former posts were first identified at the Cahokia site in 1961. At least 4 separate woodhenges are known all about in the same location, one of which has been reconstructed within the bounds of the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site.

The Central Mississippi Valley Archaeological Research Institute (CMVARI) is a non-profit organization through which professional and non-professional support is mobilized for conducting salvage archaeological research in the Greater St. Louis Metropolitan Area.

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